

EXHIBIT A

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

**GENERAL POWER OF ATTORNEY
TO PROSECUTE APPLICATIONS BEFORE
THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Assignee Name and Address: NGK Insulators, Ltd.
2-56, Suda-cho, Mizuho-ku, Nagoya-city
Aichi-prefecture, 467-8530 Japan

appoints the patent practitioners associated with Oliff & Berridge, PLC Customer Number 25944 to represent it before the United States Patent and Trademark Office in connection with any and all U.S. patent applications assigned to the above-named assignee.

The undersigned is authorized to act on behalf of the assignee.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THIS APPLICATION SHOULD BE SENT TO OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC, CUSTOMER NO. 25944, TELEPHONE (703) 836-6400.

October 28, 2004
Date

Takafumi Hochi
Signature

Typed Name: Takafumi Hochi

Title: General Manager, Legal Affairs & Intellectual Property Department

ASSIGNMENT

(1-8)	Insert Name(s) of Inventor(s) (1) <u>Reiji MATSUBARA</u> (5) _____ (2) <u>Tetsuo TOYOSHIMA</u> (6) _____ (3) _____ (7) _____ (4) _____ (8) _____
-------	--

In consideration of the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) and other good and valuable consideration paid to each of the undersigned, each undersigned agrees to assign, and hereby does assign, transfer and set over to

(9)	Insert Name of Assignee (9) <u>NGK INSULATORS, LTD.</u>
(10)	Insert Address of Assignee (10) <u>2-56, Suda-cho, Mizuho-ku, Nagoya-shi, Aichi-ken, Japan</u>

(hereinafter designated as the Assignee) and Assignee's heirs, successors, assigns and legal representatives, the entire right, title and interest for the United States of America as defined in 35 U.S.C. §100, in the invention, and in all applications for patent including any and all provisional, non-provisional, divisional, continuation, international, confirmation, substitute and reissue application(s), and all Letters Patent, extensions, reissues and reexamination certificates that may be granted on the invention known as

(11)	Insert Identification such as Title, Case Number, or Foreign Application Number (11) <u>HONEYCOMB STRUCTURE</u>
------	--

(Attorney Docket No. _____)

for which the undersigned has (have) executed an application for patent in the United States of America on even date herewith or

(12)	Insert Date of Signing of Application (12) <u>September 22, 2006</u> on _____
------	---

(13)	Alternative Identification for filed applications (13) U.S. application Serial Number <u>10/549,758</u> filed _____
------	---

1) Each undersigned agrees to execute all papers necessary in connection with any application and any continuing, divisional or reissue applications for the invention, and any patent(s) issuing thereon, and also to execute separate assignments in connection with such applications and patents as the Assignee may deem necessary.

2) Each undersigned agrees to execute all papers necessary in connection with any interference which may be declared concerning any application or continuation or division thereof, or any patent or reissue application based thereon, for the invention, and to cooperate with the Assignee in every way possible in obtaining evidence and going forward with such interference.

3) Each undersigned agrees to execute all papers and documents and perform any act which may be necessary in connection with claims or provisions of the International Convention for Protection of Industrial Property or similar agreements.

4) Each undersigned agrees to perform all affirmative acts which may be necessary to obtain, maintain or confirm by reissue or reexamination a grant of a valid United States patent to the Assignee.

5) Each undersigned authorizes and requests the Commissioner of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to issue any and all Letters Patents of the United States resulting from said application(s) to the said Assignee, as Assignee of the entire interest, and covenants that he has full right to convey the entire interest herein assigned, and that he has not executed, and will not execute, any agreements in conflict herewith, and agrees that this assignment is binding on him and his heirs, successors, assigns and legal representatives.

6) Each undersigned hereby grants the firm of **OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC** the power to insert on this assignment any further identification that may be necessary or desirable in order to comply with the rules of the United States Patent and Trademark Office for recordation of this document.

In witness whereof, executed by the undersigned on the date(s) opposite the undersigned name(s).

Date	<u>September 22, 2006</u>	Inventor Signature <u>Reiji Matsubara</u> (SEAL)
Date	<u>September 22, 2006</u>	Inventor Signature _____ (SEAL)
Date	<u>September 22, 2006</u>	Inventor Signature <u>Tetsuo Toyoshima</u> (SEAL)
Date	_____	Inventor Signature _____ (SEAL)
Date	_____	Inventor Signature _____ (SEAL)
Date	_____	Inventor Signature _____ (SEAL)
Date	_____	Inventor Signature _____ (SEAL)
Date	_____	Inventor Signature _____ (SEAL)

This assignment should preferably be signed before: (a) a Notary Public if within the U.S.A. (b) a U.S. Consul if outside the U.S.A. If neither, then it should be signed before at least two witnesses who also sign here:

Date	_____	Witness	_____
Date	_____	Witness	_____